

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 3269

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 28, 2008

Title: An act relating to the roving early intervention specialist pilot program.

Brief Description: Creating a roving early intervention specialist pilot program.

Sponsors: House Committee on App Subcom Ed (originally sponsored by Representatives Roach, Haler, Williams, Campbell, Rodne and Ross).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/19/08, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/28/08 [DPA-WM, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Eide, Hobbs, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig and Rasmussen.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Minority Member; Holmquist.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: In 2006 the Legislature created the Department of Early Learning (DEL) as an executive branch agency. The primary duties of DEL are to implement early learning policy and to coordinate, consolidate, and integrate child care and early learning programs in order to administer programs and funds efficiently.

DEL is required to work in conjunction with the statewide Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Network and other stakeholders to create local R&R organizations. These organizations may carry out needs assessments, resource development, provider training, technical assistance, and parent information and training. DEL is required to provide staff support and technical assistance and actively seek public and private money for distribution as grants to the R&R Network and local organizations.

Federal law directs states to provide services to families with infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) coordinates a statewide system of early intervention programs for eligible children and their families. Currently, only some counties in Washington provide funding for these programs, and among those that do, the level differs significantly.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): Subject to the availability of funds, DEL must administer the Roving Early Intervention Specialist Pilot Program beginning July 1, 2008. The purpose of the program is to provide assistance to licensed child care providers and families with children who are age birth to five with special needs. The pilot must be conducted in Pierce County.

One roving early intervention specialist must be housed at the local R&R in Pierce County. The specialist must, at a minimum, have a B.A. degree, preferably in child and family counseling or early intervention services. The specialist must assist families find child care and other related services; coordinate with families and child care providers to ensure a child's enrollment and smooth transition into a child care facility; recruit new child care providers and provide professional and technical assistance to licensed child care providers; and encourage child care providers not to expel a child with special needs until the specialist has had the opportunity to improve concerns. The professional and technical assistance includes site visits to assist with the providers' challenges and training for the providers.

By August 1, 2009, DEL must report findings to the Governor and the appropriate education and fiscal committees of the Legislature. DEL must report how often providers received timely consulting and evaluation assistance; how many children who might have been asked to leave a child care facility were retained due to the intervention of the specialist; and how many providers reported improvement with the children's learning progress and readiness. DEL must also provide recommendations for increasing the number of roving early intervention specialists to serve the statewide R&R Network.

A null and void clause is included.

DSHS must contract with all counties to provide funding for early intervention services to eligible children. Each county must partner with local lead agencies, school districts, and birth-to-three providers, to provide or contract for early intervention services to all eligible children within the county who have been identified as needing services.

DSHS is required to contract with each county through existing employment and day programs to provide funding for early intervention services. The rate of funding required for new and existing persons is described and includes the amount required by counties.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): Requires DSHS to contract with all counties to provide early intervention services for children with developmental disabilities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Second Substitute Bill: PRO: It is difficult to place a child with autism in child care because providers do not have sufficient training. The providers that take children with special needs are always full. Some providers are quick to kick a child out because they cannot cope with the child's needs. As a result, parents end up

missing work to care for their children with special needs. Consultants are needed to provide direction and information to parents and providers. The Pierce County Early Learning Consortium is ready to move forward with the roving specialist and the pilot will show that this service works well.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Diana Stadden, Autism Society of Washington; Diane Kroll, parent and educator; Christina Klahn, Bates Technical College; Michael Smith, father; Helen Myrick, Paul Jackson, Pierce County Early Learning Consortium.